

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2092

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MANAGUA 0290

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: BEXP, EAIR, MASS, NU

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE SALE OF US COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT & EXECUTIVE
JET IN NICARAGUA

REF: (A) 76 MANAGUA 3303, (B) 76 MANAGUA 3921

1. MR. WILLIAM CAMPBELL, A SALES REPRESENTATIVE OF LOCKHEED AIRCRAFT, VISITED NICARAGUA DURING THE WEEK OF JANUARY 15. HE HAD MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT SOMOZA, WITH OFFICIALS OF THE SOMOZA-OWNED NICARAGUAN-FLAG AIR CARRIER, LANICA, AND WITH NICARAGUAN AIR FORCE (FAN) OFFICIALS. THIS MISSION SET UP CAMPBELL'S APPOINTMENT WITH THE PRESIDENT AT THE LATTER'S REQUEST.

2. ACCORDING TO CAMPBELL, HE SPENT TWO HOURS WITH SOMOZA GOING OVER AN AIRCRAFT ROUTE STUDY WHICH LOCKHEED HAD PREPARED FOLLOWING CAMPBELL'S OCTOBER 1976 VISIT TO NICARAGUA; THIS STUDY HAD BEEN REQUESTED BY MINISTER OF DEFENSE COLONEL SANCHEZ. SOMOZA TOLD CAMPBELL THAT HE WAS INTERESTED IN ACQUIRING TWO L-100 AIRCRAFT FOR LANICA BUT DID NOT WISH TO BUY ANY FOR THE FAN. SOMOZA ALSO EXPRESSED INTEREST IN A POSSIBLE LEASE/PURCHASE ARRANGEMENT TO ACQUIRE A LOCKHEED JET STAR (EXECUTIVE AIRCRAFT) TO REPLACE THE HAWKER-SIDDELEY EXECUTIVE JET WHICH THE GON IS NOW
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LEASING FROM THE UK FOR PRESIDENTIAL TRAVEL. (CAMPBELL TOLD US THAT THE LATEST VERSION OF THE KET STAR HAS A 2,000 MILE RANGE AND GREATER FUEL EXONOMY THAN EARLIER VERSIONS. IT IS THE LATTER VERSION WHICH REPORTEDLY APPEALS T SOMOZA.) CAMPBELL OFFERED TO ASSIST IN OBTAINING FINANCING FOR THE ACQUISITION OF LOCKHEED AIRCRAFT IF LANICA CHOSE TO BUY FROM HIS COMPANY AND REPORTEDLY INDICATED THAT HE WOULD SEEK EXIMBANK ASSISTANCE IN PUTTING

TOGETHER A FINANCIAL PACKAGE.

3. AT LANICA, CAMPBELL MET WITH BRIGADIER GENERAL (RET) SAAVEDRA, DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER OF PRODUCTION, AND CAPTAIN MURCIANO, GENERAL MANAGER, WHO PROVIDED HIM WITH DATA WHICH WILL ENABLE LOCKHEED TO DO A COST EFFECTIVENESS STUDY ON THE L-100 PLANES.

4. BEFORE RETURNING TO THE US ON JANUARY 15, CAMPBELL INFORMED US THAT HE HAD PROMISED TO SEND TO PRESIDENT SOMOZA LOCKHEED'S COST EFFECTIVENESS STUDY WITHIN TWO WEEKS; HE SAID HE WOULD ALSO PROVIDE THE EMBASSY WITH A COPY OF THE NEW STUDY.

5. AS REPORTED IN REF A, LANICA EXPRESSED INTEREST EARLY LAST SUMMER IN REPLACING THE TWO CONVAIR 880'S WHICH IT HAS BEEN LEASING FOR ITS INTERNATIONAL ROUTES. AN, AS NOTED IN REF B, LANICA LEASED TWO ADDITIONAL AIRCRAFT (A CONVAIR-880 AND A BOEING 707 FREIGHTER) IN AUGUST FOR ITS OVERSEAS SERVICE. OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT LOCKHEED HAS A FAIRLY GOOD CHANCE OF MAKING A SIZEABLE AIRCRAFT SALE TO LANICA IF FAVORABLE FINANCING TERMS ARE AVAILABLE. THE POSSIBILITY OF A LEASE-SALE OF AN EXECUTIVE JET TO THE TON ALSO LOOKS PROMISING.
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Message Attributes

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